

THE ADVERTISER.

BROWNVILLE, NEB.
THURSDAY MORNING, JUNE 23, 1881.

THE MAIDEN I LOVE.

Just fast enough to be pretty,
Just gentle enough to be sweet,
Just saucy enough to be loved,
Just dainty enough to be neat,
Just light enough to be graceful,
Just strong enough to be useful,
Just merry enough to be gay,
Just true enough to be tender,
Just kind enough to be brave,
Just proud enough to be ambitious,
Just thoughtful enough to be grave,
Just loving enough to be true,
Just pure enough to be loved,
Just honest enough to be trusted,
Just brave enough to be feared,
Just gentle enough to be sweet,
Just saucy enough to be loved,
Just dainty enough to be neat,
Just light enough to be graceful,
Just strong enough to be useful,
Just merry enough to be gay,
Just true enough to be tender,
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Just brave enough to be feared,

Why I Went to the West Coast.

A SEA STORY.

After a long commission, mostly passed in the fierce heat of the tropics, it was very pleasant to return to old England and its cool, leafy glades. As soon as the old ship was paid off, I rushed away by the express train to my uncle's place in the country.

A better example of the ancient Elizabethan Manor House than this would be hard to find. A broad, avenue of stately elms led up to the house with its many gables and steep roofs, its old bell turret and twisted chimneys, and its old-fashioned windows of honest red brick against the shade of the rock-haunted trees that sheltered it from the summer sun, and in winter the force of the north winds.

And here the reigning deity of the place was my pretty golden-haired cousin, Kitty Heathcote, in the sunshine of whose smiles I, in common with many others, thought it the most supreme happiness to bask—and so perhaps it was; but we were sure to find out before long that it was a very dangerous pastime.

Kitty was about nineteen years of age, very highly accomplished, and of an exceedingly fascinating manner. Her mother having died many years before, she was left the sole mistress of the establishment. She was an heiress in her own right, and consequently became aware to the fact that she was a pearl of great price; and yet, even the latest of her rejected lovers, of whom the name was legion, could not in the bitterness of her disappointment, say that she was proud or arrogant. All the tenants on the estate, and the people in the neighboring villages, delighted to speak of the goodness, the thoughtfulness, the kind consideration of the squire's daughter. In fact, the whole country was ringing with her praises, and it was no wonder that she had always a crowd of suitors for that pretty little hand of hers, and it was not until, like the other gliding moths that flutter round that too-dazzling flame, I got severely burnt, that I began to perceive that she was nothing less than an incorrigible flirt.

Before I acquired this unwelcome piece of knowledge—a lesson, indeed, that I was very loth to learn—I was rejoiced in the high place that I was fit enough to think I had taken in her affections. Day by day I grew deeper and more blindly in love, and was on the point of making a formal declaration and proposal when a rival, whom I have since had cause to remember, appeared on the scene. James Traill Witherington, the son of an old friend of my uncle's, came at this time to pay him a visit. He had lately returned from the west coast of Africa, where he had been appointed to hold a Government appointment, and was also reported to be very wealthy—Two facts that would combine with one another.

In appearance he was a tall, well-made man; he had a dark, sallow face of the Spanish type, very black hair and sinister-looking black eyes. People said he was good-looking. I failed to see it—perhaps because, at the moment we met, I felt a dislike for him which eventually grew to absolute hatred.

He began by making desperate love to Miss Heathcote and she appeared to encourage him. At least I thought so. I naturally liked him none the better for all this. He regarded me as rather a formidable rival, but even had he been so, the matter would have been of no consequence to me; we were destined to hate one another, and we did to our hearts content. He was certainly wealthy, but I never could make myself believe in the Government appointment at Benin. Slave-dealer seemed more likely, but I said nothing of my suspicions, which, it must be admitted, were more founded on prejudice than on any reasonable grounds.

Things thus went on for some time very unsatisfactorily, and I resolved to obtain some expression of opinion from my cousin; and so it happened that in long conversation with Kitty about our Spanish-looking friend, she pronounced his sentence, and gave me dismissed as well, in these memorable words—

"Oh, my dear coz, I haven't the slightest intention of marrying him whatever. I would as soon think of marrying you—and that you know I am not going to do. I have seen I'll lead him such a dance."

And away she ran across the lawn, singing and laughing as gaily as if the world had no sorrows, no bitter disappointments.

Her light heart little dreamt of the cruel heavy blow that she had just inflicted—never thought of the painfully-builed fabric of long cherished hopes those words had torn and crushed—the heart that she had bowed down, if not utterly broken.

How long I sat there alone, staring at the chair, I cannot tell. This was the first great sorrow, and I bore it badly. Presently, however there came a feeling of relief, and subsequently actually of exultation—of relief that it was all over—of exultation in the thought of the bitter draught that my rival, sooner or later, would have to swallow.

Why did fate send that man across my path just at this moment? In me came with his insolent sneer and swagger, and contrived to turn the conversation upon his favorite subject—the incompetence of the Royal Navy and its officers. He never lost an opportunity of abusing the service, but on this occasion his remarks were more than usually disparaging. It was evident that he was bent upon a quarrel, and he found in me, for the first time, a reciprocity of sentiment. He became more and more insulting, and eventually personally offensive. He wished to provoke me to strike him. He succeeded in his object; I struck him in the face.

As I expected the blow was not returned. A few hurried words about seconds, pistols, the copier at sunset, and he was gone. So far he had achieved his purpose; for the rest he was a dead shot in the water, and the only clever thing I knew of him.

Seconds were found in two young farmers on the estate, and were soon instructed in their duties. That evening the wind whistled a weird dirge through the forest trees, eddying and scattering the leaves of autumn, we met in the place appointed. With few preliminaries we took up

our positions, his black, snake-like eyes gleaming with a more sinister expression than ever, and, at the given signal, fired—or rather he fired, it is said, before the time, and I fell, the pistol dropping from my grasp undischarged. The bullet had pierced my right side, and thinking from the blood that fountained out of my mouth, that the wound was mortal, my adversary fled.

Carried back to the old Manor House, for some weeks I hovered between life and death, during which time Kitty Heathcote nursed and tended me with more than a sister's care. At length the doctor reported that his patient was out of danger, and my stern old uncle, who throughout had refused to see me, sent a message to the effect that I was to leave his house as soon as I was able to travel. This edict of the old man's was received with great regret, not only by me, but by another as well. Yes, the fickle-hearted Kate had just up to her flirtations, and was felled no longer, that "city," which is so justly said to be kind to her, had worked the spell, and now she, in her turn, loved with a far greater affection than she had before. As I loved—Kitty loved; and I that she loved! What a heaven there was in the thought! My inexorable uncle had no more terrors for me, my thigh being in the way to endeavor to deceive her. But that was not to be done by trying to induce her to desert her fair-haired old father, in his last days, for the man whom he was wont to drive from his doors. I scorned the thought that could suggest such a course. No, there was nothing for it but to go adrift again, and abide the chances and changes of a few years.

A request to be appointed to a vessel serving on that fatal station, the West Coast of Africa, was only too willingly granted by the Lords of the Admiralty. It may well be deemed a strange choice for one whose highest hopes were just arriving at a climax. Under the circumstances that existed immediately before the outbreak of the duel, it would not have been so extraordinary. The coast is the well known refuge of the hopeless; there they commit suicide honorably. But on the West Coast, I trust, there is an unusually strong and well-tried constitution to preserve me unscathed from the virulent attacks of the deadly fevers and malarial of the African swamps. Besides, I was a strong, vigorous, and energetic man, and I felt that I could stand up to anything that might come my way.

After the duel James Traill Witherington was never seen again. A bundle of papers were found in his trunk. All scraps at opening them were removed by the suggestion of the obvious unfairness of the duel. An examination at leisure showed that the papers showed conclusively that not only did he carry on this revolting trade, but that he did so very unfairly; so much so, indeed, that on two occasions he had narrowly escaped paying with his life the penalty of his injustice.

And now, if I could (I thought) put just a stop to his slave-dealing propensities, it would prove to him a more effective remedy than any of his ideas of his own. Concerning the incompetency of Her Britannic Majesty's naval service. At the same time it would be possible to obtain that satisfaction to which I was entitled, and of which he, in so cowardly a manner, defrauded me. There was my motive.

After a most painful parting from Kitty, the father still unrepentant, and three months having passed away, I found myself in command of a fine Spanish gun vessel in the Right of Benin. No time was lost in endeavoring to find Witherington, no such person was known. In all the papers the names had been carefully blotted out but many being in his own handwriting, there was no doubt as to whom they referred. It was, therefore, quite possible that he was trading under another name. One Miguel Antonio de Santo, a noted slave-dealer, was said to answer his description exactly. From Witherington's appearance and knowledge of the language he might well have passed for a Spaniard. He was reported to have gone to Cuba, but there was no reliance to be placed on any information as to slave or slave-dealers. It seemed probable, however, that this was the case, for during two years in it could be seen or heard of him, and I nearly gave up all hope of meeting him.

In the meantime we had tolerable success in our cruising operations, having captured a very fair number of prizes, and some of whom were of considerable worth of particular notice. Towards the end of our three years' commission the doctor and I landed with our rifles one day for the enjoyment of a little shooting.

We wandered a long way down the coast, from the flats of the old Calabar river to where the usually low coast rises into red sandstone cliffs of some height. From the summit of these cliffs the sharks could be plainly seen rising and falling with the long ground-swell of the ocean. As they backed in the sunlight, their sharp, black, dorsal fins appearing above the surface, we tried a few shots at them, but with no great success.

The sun was getting low, and we were on the point of returning, when there appeared a savage procession coming from inland towards the next cliff to the one on which we were. Judging that some Fetish worship or superstitious rite were about to take place, we concealed ourselves behind a rock to watch the proceedings.

On came this wild "horde" of savages, with much beating of drums and cymbals, howling and shouting, and other discordant sounds. Their usually ugly faces were rendered ten times more hideous by a profusion of red and yellow paint, which was also daubed freely over their bodies. Thus as they came wildly dancing and leaping along, filling the air with their savage cries, they more resembled a band of fiends than human beings. They were preceded by four men bearing a long wide plank; this, on reaching the edge of the cliff, they launched out nearly half its length and left balanced on the brink.

The dreadful truth flashed across our minds, for this explained everything. They were about to offer a human sacrifice to their Fetish. We were struck sick and faint as we thought of their horrible custom of making the victim walk to the end of the plank, which overbalancing, precipitates the miserable wretch with a shriek and a plunge into the sea, to be whistled by struggling, devoured by the swarming sharks. And yet we dared not move to turn away from this revolting spectacle.

The victim is generally intoxicated with some poisonous decoction of drugs, and at the last moment, being completely stupefied, voluntarily walks the plank. It would render the sacrifice inefficient were hands to be laid upon the victim to push him over. But in this case there seemed to be some difficulty from the struggling on the verge of the precipice it would seem that the miserable creature had refused to make a sacrifice of himself. Perhaps the drugs had not done their work.

Presently we observed them gazing the unfortunate being on to his destruction with the sharp points of long arrows. Up to this time we had

been unable to catch sight of the victim; but now, the crowd opened a little on our side, we saw him, and with one voice exclaimed, "Good Heavens, is a European?"

There in that savage crowd he stood bleeding, frantic with pain of the stabs from the arrow-heads, wildly imploring mercy, his cries drowned in theirs, and doing what he could to resist the fearful death that awaited him. One more instant and he would have been over.

A steady aim, and with a sharp crack from my rifle, a bullet went slinging through the air, and found its billet in the head of the chief, smashing in his skull and stretching him lifeless on the ground; the doctor served his fire whilst I reloaded. For a moment they seemed to waver, perhaps totally bewildered; then, uttering terrified, took to their heels, and scampered away with all the speed of superstitious fear.

As they were out of sight, we ran to the victim, whom they had entirely forgotten in their headlong flight. He was sitting with his back towards us, gasping, and incoherently, and looking wildly and incoherently. His mind was evidently gone, and he fancied himself in the sea fighting with the sharks, for he was saying in a thick unnatural voice—

"Keep off, ye ghastly grey sharks—hurry! hurry! why will ye glare so? Tear me, ye triple-fanged demons, I never harmed ye. What a bitter draught that was! Ah! you have driven me black imps now. Curse ye, I fear ye not. Keep but one white devil, that I myself made, away from me, and then I defy you all, Curse ye!"

He turned suddenly, and I found myself face to face with my long sought adversary.

It was none other than James Traill Witherington. Bloodshot eyes met mine, they dilated fearfully—his whole form was convulsed with a frenzy of maniacal terror. He started back, shrieking—

"Tie her! Tie her! This is the devil's work! I have been deceived! Oh, save me! And then in a lower tone a kind of hoarse whisper, "Keep him off, good sharks! tell him not that I have driven him down, because I was his blood, how it roars and rushes out of his mouth! Blood! blood! No! 'tis not 'tis molten copper!" and shrieking again, "see, he bathes my throat! he has poured it down my throat! Mercy—mercy—spare me!"

As he said this, he ran backwards, towards the edge of the cliff. In vain we tried to warn him of his danger. The more we approached him, the faster he ran backwards, screaming—

"Away—away! keep back, ye fiends—keep back! save me from him! Keep, I say, back—keep him off!"

Thus shrieking, he stepped back over the precipice and disappeared. A dull, heavy splash told us that the shark-infested waters had received him, and it was all over.

It turned out subsequently that Witherington, alias Miguel Antonio de Santo, had been carrying on the nefarious policy of kidnapping, instead of fairly buying slaves, and in doing so had himself fallen into the hands of the natives. They were not slow to find out what to do with him. He would make a good sacrifice to their deity as one of their own men. Although we cheated the Fetish of his victim, we had not robbed Nemesis of hers.

On my return to England, I received a most affectionate letter from my uncle, consenting to my marriage with his daughter, my pretty cousin, Kitty Heathcote; and now, when my wife Kitty reads this, she will know the only secret that I ever kept from her—namely, why I went to the West Coast.

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well-being of your soul, and for the

salvation of your life, and for the

eternity of your happiness, and for the

glory of your God, and for the

honor of your name, and for the

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eternity of your happiness, and for the

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